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ABSTRACT

The Career Interest Inventory is a paper-and-pencil, self-report career guidance instrument that is designed to assist students in grades 7 through 12 and adults with career decisions. It can be administered to individuals or groups and alone or in combination with the Differential Aptitude Test. It is available in machine-scored and hand-scorable versions. Statements in the 2 levels (Level 1 for grades 7 through 9, and Level 2 for grades 10 and above) are responded to on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The attractive and high quality test materials are appealing and easy to understand. The manual for school counselors is well presented and straightforward. Summary statistics for the norms are presented, and the evidence for internal consistency and validity is reviewed. One of the major appeals of the inventory is the simplicity of the presentation of the individual profile. The information about scoring for the hand-scorable version is not adequate, and the scoring seems cumbersome and confusing. With this reservation, the instrument is judged an appealing and appropriate measure for career exploration. It makes a good alternative to more complicated inventories. (SLD)

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The Career Interest Inventory: A Review and Critique

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Title: Career Interest Inventory
Author/Publisher: The Psychological Corporation
Date of publication: 1991
Time required to administer: No time limit; approximately 30-55 minutes for Introduction to Exploring Interests; approximately 30 minutes for the Career Interest Inventory.
Cost: Machine and hand-scorable versions: Level 1--$35/25; Level 2--$38/25

Purpose and Nature of Test

The Career Interest Inventory is a paper-and-pencil, self-report, career guidance instrument which is designed to assist students, grades 7-12, and adults with career decisions. It can be administered for individuals or groups and by itself or in combination with the Differential Aptitude Test (DAT). The test is available in two forms: a machine-scorable form and a hand-scorable booklet.

Because needs and perceptions of the world of work change as one matures, the Career Interest Inventory has two levels: Level 1 for grades 7-9 and Level 2 for Grades 10-12 and beyond. Level 1 consists of 120 work-activity statements and 32 high school subject and activity statements. Level 2 contains 150 work-activity statements and 20 post-secondary course statements. The statements on both forms are responded to on a 5-point Likert-type scale from "Like very much" to "Dislike a great deal".

The work-activity statements for both Level 1 and Level 2 are linked with occupational information from the Department of Labor publications: the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT), the Guide for Occupational Exploration (GOE), the Occupational Outlook Handbook and the Job Outlook in Brief.

The output of the machine-scorable form which is purchased from the Psychological Corporation is available in three forms:

the Individual Report, the Counselor's Report and a group report, the Planning Summary. For Level 1, the Individual Report yields scores on 15 Occupational Scales, 16 Subject Areas and 16 School Activities. Level 2 reports scores on 15 Occupational Scales and 20 Subject Areas. The Occupational Group scales are homogeneous scale interest scores which are reported as "High", "Medium" or "Low". The responses for Subject Areas and School Activities are reported as check-marks indicating "Dislike", "Like" or "Neutral" corresponding directly to the inventory questions. Because different response patterns can yield the same interest score (for example, two "Highs" plus two "Lows" can yield the same result as four "Mediums"), a consistency index has been developed which aids the counselor in interpreting the scores.

The Counselor's Report shows the level of interest the student has in each of the Occupational Scales, the GOE code which corresponding to each area, the Consistency Index showing the student's pattern or response and the student's preferences for school subjects and activities. The third report, the Planning Summary, is an optional report which presents all of the same information contained in the Individual Report and the Counselor's Report in summary statistics. It can be used by teachers, counselors, school districts, etc. for planning curriculum and programs or for general information about the groups taking the test.

Although the Career Interest Inventory is designed to be given by itself, it is recommended that it be given in conjunction with the DAT. The rationale is that this presents a

more realistic profile of not only what interests the student has, but also what he/she is capable of achieving. When administered together, the Individual Report includes a profile of DAT scores with a narrative which relates these to the student's interests in the occupational, subject and activities areas. If the Career Interest Inventory is administered alone, it is recommended by the authors that the counselor relate the school subjects and activities to the Occupational Groups categories and offers a table of related areas of interest to assist in doing so. Before administering the test, it is also recommended that a 30-55 minute introductory session be held in order to acquaint the student(s) with the world of work. A separate workbook is available for this pupose.

Practical Evaluation

The test materials are attractive and of high quality. The booklet, Exploring Interests, and the hand-scorable test booklet are appealing and easy to understand. The questions are carefully worded and appear to relate to the purposes for which the test was designed. The Counselor's Manual is extremely well-presented and straightforward. All relevant information for interpreting the Career Interest Inventory is readily accessible in a language that school counselors can easily understand.

Although it is recommended that the examiner become familiar with the procedures for administering the hand-scorable version of the Career Interest Inventory, no formal training is required. With this in mind, the Directions for Administering booklet is very explicit and well presented. The manual stresses

that the counselor should be familiar with the rationale underlying the Career Interest Inventory and scoring procedures for interpretation of the test. This reviewer would agree that it is preferable that counselors be familiar with career theory but one could interpret this inventory without much more than the manual itself, the interpretation of each of the reports is explained in such a simple, straight-forward fashion.

Technical Evaluation

Norms

Summary statistics are presented in tables. Means and standard deviations by grade and sex are shown for the 15 Occupational Groups. Percentages for females and males are given for Low, Medium and High interest scores. The highest single percentage is Low interest in "Building Trades" by females (95.3). The highest of the High interest scores is "Legal Services" for females (35.1). Percentages for females and males who like and dislike school subject areas and school activities are presented as well.

Reliability

Internal consistency measured by Chronbach's coefficient alpha was determined for each of the 15 Occupational Group scales. These ranged from .82 to.94. The coefficients varied slightly from Level 1 to Level 2 with the greatest difference on the Management scale which was .84 on Level 1 and .91 on Level 2. These coefficients indicate respectable internal consistency overall. There are no test-retest reliability data reported in the manual.

Validity

Principal-components factor analysis was performed on the work-activity statements with orthogonal rotation to a varimax criterion. For the 120 work-activity statements in Level 1, eight factors were determined to have loadings $\geq .30$. For the 150 work-activity statements in Level 2, 10 factors were found. Examples given in the manual show that all eight statements related to "Building Trades" had their highest loading on Factor 1, "Working with Hands/Things", and that statements related to computer occupations loaded on Factor VI, "Working with Computers".

When the Career Interest Inventory was compared to the Ohio Vocational Interest Survey (OVIS II), the highest correlations were between "judgementally matched scales" (p. 89)--ie: those judged to have the closest matches. No explanation is given as to how these judgements were made. Examples of these correlations are: Clerical Services correlated .62 with OVIS II Clerical Scale; Legal Services correlated .59 with OVIS II Legal Service; and Machine Operation correlated .74 with OVIS II Machine Operation scale.

Pearson product moment correlations for both Level 1 and Level 2 showed similar results. The highest intercorrelations (.86) were those of the trades ("Building Trades" and "Machine Operation"). Conversely, the lowest (.01) were between the "Building Trades" and "Educational Services".

Summary Evaluation

Given that the Career Interest Inventory is a new instrument, there are no previously published reviews.

A major appeal of the Career Interest Inventory is the simplicity of the presentation of the Individual Profile. The output is immediately clear to the test-taker which is not true for other career instruments like the Strong which requires training to understand and interpret.

The greatest reservation this reviewer has is regarding the hand-scorable version of the inventory. Although directions are given in the test booklet itself, there is no explanation in the manual about how to score or interpret the results of present profiles to the test-taker. The questions are straightforward, but the scoring seems cumbersome and confusing. Also, there is no explanation for presenting a profile for the student from the hand-scorable results. Given the great detail given to the machine-scorable version, this is a glaring omission.

It appears to this reviewer that the Career Interest Inventory is an appealing and appropriate measure for the purpose of career exploration. It is based on well-researched career publications and its validity seems to be supported.

In summary, the Career Interest Inventory is an adequate career interest measure. Because of its simplicity in interpretation, it makes a good alternative to others which are more complicated. This reviewer would feel comfortable using the Inventory as a career counseling tool with both students and adults.